AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--According to a second aspect of the present invention, a soldering method comprising the step of: preparing a nickel/gold electroless plated layer composed of a nickel layer formed by nickel-phosphorus electroless plating and a gold layer formed on the nickel layer; and soldering the nickel/gold electroless plated layer using a solder so that an intermetallic compound is formed at an interface surface between the nickel layer and the solder, wherein the intermetallic compound is shaped like a cauliflower, i.e. is botryoidal.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--According to a fourth aspect of the present invention, a solder is comprised of: a nickel layer formed by nickel-phosphorus electroless plating on the conductor terminal; an intermetallic compound layer formed on the nickel layer; and a solder layer formed on the intermetallic compound layer. The intermetallic compound layer has cauliflower-shaped, i.e. botryoidal surfaces formed in a solder-layer's side thereof.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--The inventors observed the respective appearances of intermetallic compounds formed in the above three cases (1)-(3)

to find the cause of the differences in mechanical strength. Since an intermetallic compound has been formed in the solder joint, the observation is made after the intermetallic compound is exposed by dissolving the solder component of the solder joint using a chemical agent. As the result, the inventors found that the intermetallic compound has been shaped like a cauliflower, i.e. is botryoidal, in the solder joint in all the cases (1)-(3). Fig. 4 shows an appearance of an intermetallic compound formed from Sn-Pb eutectic solder and copper in the case (1). Fig. 5 shows an appearance of an intermetallic compound formed from a nickel/gold electro plated surface and Sn-Pb eutectic solder in the case (3).--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--In contrast, according to the present invention, in the case where an Sn-Ag-Cu solder is used to form a solder joint, a cauliflower-shaped or botryoidal intermetallic compound composed mainly of tin and copper, further including nickel, had been formed at an interface surface between the solder layer and the nickel layer, as shown in Fig. 7.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 11, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--The conclusion from the above studies is that the mechanical strength of a solder joint is closely associated with the appearance or shape of an intermetallic compound formed in

the vicinity of an interface surface between nickel and solder layers. Especially, a high-strength solder joint is caused by a cauliflower-shaped intermetallic compound formed in the vicinity of an interface surface between nickel and solder layers. In other words, it is important to find a method for forming a cauliflower-shaped or botryoidal intermetallic compound so as to improve the joint strength.--